HARAMBEE FLAME

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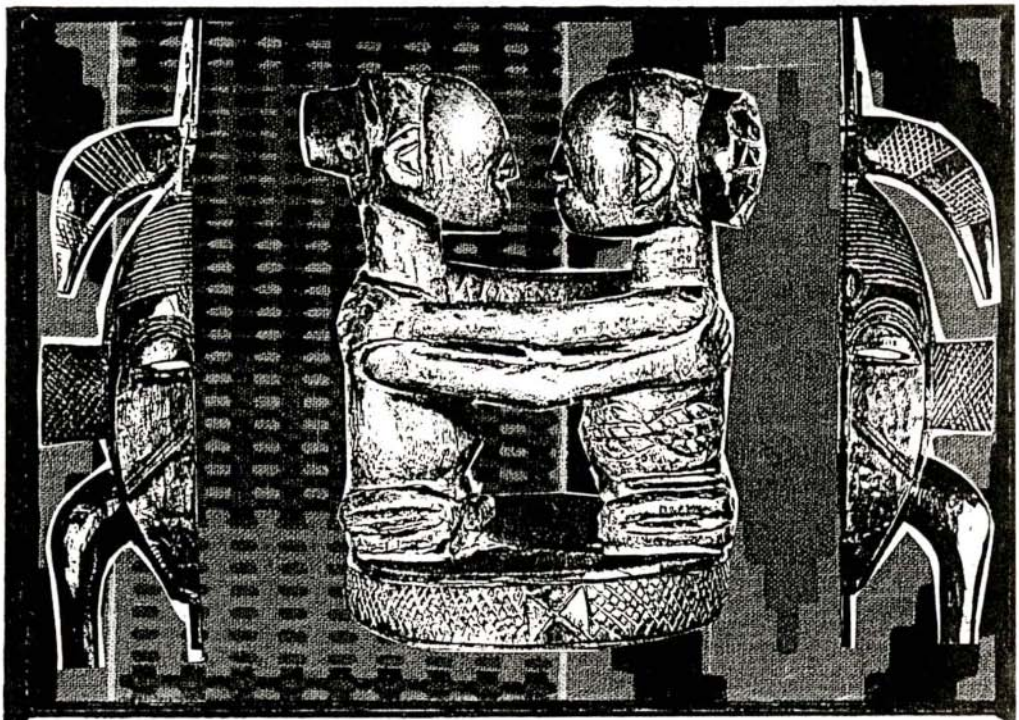

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HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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*HARAMBEE FLAME Editor

COMMENTARY

In this, the state prison chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, we seek transformation from "black" malehood to **African manhood.** The issue of this transformation is one we've dealt with recently in the FLAME. But life has a way of tipping you off that some things need be repeated.

What is this "'black' malehood"? It is the condition of being of African ancestry and being, physically, a boy or a man. A "black" male has little or no awareness of his **African** identity and makes little or no effort to learn about the Africa-based history, cultures, and/or traditional values of his people. He may be of the legal age of adulthood but has not learned to either recognize his responsibilities or act on the basis of them, has not learned to control his emotions and drives, has not learned to distinguish between wants and needs, and lacks the ability to act in a disciplined manner.

An African man, on the other hand, is one who, consciously or subconsciously, identifies himself as an African; studies the history, cultures, and values of his people; and tries to act in accordance with his identity as an African. He recognizes that he has responsibilities and operates according to them, has established proper balance in his life between intellect and emotions, knows the difference between wants and needs, and exercises discipline in his life. In addition, because he has internalized traditional African values, he places the needs of his family(immediate and extended) ahead of his own individual interests.

Returning to the "black" male, because he has little sense

Clarification: In the March edition of the HARAMBEE FLAME, we presented a letter on rap music and hip-hop culture by Omari K. Jamal-Akinyele but neglected to say anything about him. The Brother, formerly a student at U.N.L., was part of a rap group here in Lincoln, called "Peace Nation." In his mid-twenties, he is now living in Edinboro, Pennsylvania.

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of responsibility and lacks control over his drives and

urges, he tends to accept a European value system and commercial media images of girls and women. In fact, it is this same value system and images that contribute to the "black" male's lack of sense of responsibility. He probably doesn't have respect for girls and women and sees them as merely means for getting off sexually and/or gaining him status among his male peers. And maybe, in part, because he may have not had a father in his life and has seen his mother as bread-winner and sole nurturer, he may see females as "sugar mamas," with some kind of duty to take care of him--materially, emotionally, and otherwise. In short, while he may portray himself as being a tough and/or sophisticated "man," he is actually looking to be some girl's or woman's **baby.**

But let's get concrete with this business and look at real-life situations to further distinguish the "black" male from the African man. A "black" male might think of himself and his people as "niggas"(Make no mistake about it. There's a difference in spelling but not in meaning) and claim that the term is "just a word." An African man, on the other hand, having a knowledge of history, knows and understands that "nigger" is a product of European supremacist ideology(racism) and was and is applied to African people to designate us as sub-human. The African man has taken time to learn how the mind works and knows that, when we think of and/or speak of ourselves and each other as "niggers," it is a symptom of the disease of self-hatred. He has sense enough to know that it is no accident that, when we get into it with each other, "nigger" is typically the first word to leave our lips.

A "black" male, being on the sidelines of a basketball court and wanting to get to the other side of the court, may ignore the fact that dudes are playing ball and just walk across the court in the midst of their game. This is not surprising. He has either not learned or has forgotten the basics of common courtesy and figures the ball-players are just supposed to get out of his way, maybe because he's "bad." An African man, in the same situation, will walk around the court, if necessary, to get to the other side. He will do this both out of courtesy and because he doesn't act without considering the possible consequences of his actions. He understands that someone(s) on the court might get an attitude about him interfering in the game and want

to challenge him.

A "black" male spends much of his "free" time watching cartoons, soap operas, cop shows, etc. An African man understands that time is precious and, while he might check out some programs on the cube, he is selective because he knows that messages that come through the eyes and ears go to the brain and influence what we think. Besides, he values useful information and insight over entertainment.

An imprisoned "black" male may bug family members, his wife/female friend, and/or others to send him money so he can buy designer sweats, the latest in expensive basketball shoes, jewelry, whatever. He disregards the fact that the people he's making his pitch to have house payments, car notes, food bills, etc. But, of course, he believes he must maintain an image of living large, even in the joint. The African man, being able to distinguish wants from needs, doesn't put the beg on loved ones for material status symbols; being mature and disciplined, if he does want something that he doesn't need, he doesn't feel he has to have it right away. He saves money from his prison job assignment and gets what he wants when he's saved enough change. And unlike the "black male," who may consistently be in debt to other prisoners because he can't control his appetites, the African man in prison looks beyond the moment and understands that being in debt can very easily get one hurt or killed.

A "black" male, heavily influenced by the U.S. dominant society's emphasis on winning, on being number one, may take cheap shots on the football field or basketball court and generally play in a manner that recklessly endangers the physical safety of other players. When challenged about his style of play, he may look dumbfounded, as if someone had spoken to him in a foreign language. An African man, while not playing to lose, has managed to retain an understanding of the fact that, whether it's basketball, football, or other sport, **it's a game.** He recognizes that, while members of the opposing team are competing with his team for a victory, that doesn't make them **enemies** in a struggle of life-and-death consequences.

Remaining on the topic of sports, it is true that highschool and college varsity sports have more at stake--scholarships, potential for pro contracts--than leisure-time street ball. The same is obviously true with respect to sports on the professional level. And a look at the frequency and seriousness of injuries in football, basketball, baseball, etc. are evidence of how the higher stakes have led to harder and rougher play. But there is something bizarre about this. Regardless of the stakes, these sports are still **games.** They are **entertainment** for fans. "Black" males, in the professional ranks of these games play hard. To use a really worn-out cliche, they "give a 110%" in these games for entertainment. But typically, in the **serious** "game" of life/of our people's struggle for well-being and liberation, these athletes have no "competitive edge," don't "give 110%," and could care less about winning. We often hear these athletes talking about how "I love this game." But many, if not almost all, of them seem to love their games but not their people. Being "black" males, they can buy mansions for themselves but can't contribute to housing programs for their people, can speak loudly about officiating in games but can't utter a peep about political and economic "bad calls" by public officials to which our people are subjected. African men in sports--the few that there apparently are--know that the games they play are just games, have a sense of priority in which their people are at least as important as they are individually, and use significant portions of their incomes for our collective benefit. African men in sports study history, keep abreast of current events, try to develop an African-centered perspective, and have the courage to speak out on issues of importance.

Without doubt, there are many other areas of human activity we can look at in order to see and examine the differences between those males of African ancestry who have not gotten beyond the stage of "black" malehood and those who have become, or are becoming, African men. Whatever the area, the fact is that there is a dire need for more of us to "step up to the plate" and become the men that our people and situations require.

-Editor

EDITORIAL POLICY

The HARAMBEE FLAME is the monthly newsletter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(Nebraska State Pen chapter). Ours is a pan-Africanist publication, meaning that we view all people of African descent as **one** African people, having certain basic interests in common. Also, the HARAMBEE FLAME attempts to be Africentric, in that, through study of the history, cultures, and traditional values of African people, we seek to have and cultivate an African way of looking at things.

The main purposes of the HARAMBEE FLAME are to stimulate and inform. We list "stimulate" first because, more than anything else, we want our readers to be moved to question their/your own ideas, lives, and the circumstances in which we live and to challenge those things that must be challenged in order for us to move from a condition of mental and spiritual servitude and physical dependence upon Caucasian institutions to a state of collective self-determination. Toward this purpose, we present commentaries, poems, etc. These do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization.

The HARAMBEE FLAME provides information because wise people want to know what's going on and because certain kinds of information can stimulate the mind, inspire people to want to act, and influence them to pursue proper understanding so that the actions they take will be as effective as possible. The main vehicle we use to provide information is our "From Other Sources" feature in which we make an effort to provide news about the problems we African people are confronted by and the steps we are taking to resolve them. In this feature, we try to provide coverage of the activities of African people and developments affecting us in the U.S., the nations of Africa, and elsewhere. In "Commentary," we offer analysis of and views about current events and developments.

We encourage you to sent your comments, essays, poems, etc. to: HARAMBEE FLAME; Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE. 68542-2500.

FROM OTHER SOURCES

Addressing The Needs Of Sisters In Prison

..."Black women are more than half the nation's female prison population, with most serving sentences for nonviolent, drug- or property-related offenses. In New York, for example, which has the nation's third highest prison population, 70 percent of all women are imprisoned for nonviolent, drug-related offenses...

"A 1991 Bureau of Prisons survey, the most recent available, found that two-thirds of the women in state prisons had children. The same study found that 90 percent of male inmates said their children under age 18 were living with their mothers; only one-fourth of the children of female inmates in state prisons lived with their fathers, while more than half lived with grandparents. About 24 percent live with other relatives or friends...

"It is a small network of community-based groups such as Aid to Inmate Mothers, the Children's Visitation Program, CLAIM[Chicago Legal Aid to Incarcerated Mothers] in Chicago and Legal Services for Prisoners With Children and Grandparents as Second Parents in San Francisco, that are working with female inmates, their families, corrections officials, courts and church groups to help the children left behind and the women in prison...

"These groups also are the engines behind more ambitious efforts to reverse what they view as a wholesale warehousing of women offenders. They are pressing corrections officials to develop programs that address why the women are in prison--histories of child sexual abuse, drug abuse, abusive relationships, lack of education and poverty--and to come up with remedies to minimize further dissolution of families.

"Key to the credibility of this newer generation of support groups is the participation of a sizable number of women who are mothers and have been imprisoned. They know about the importance of maintaining maternal ties...

"National crime studies indicate slightly more than half

of all female offenders are convicted of another crime within three years of release. No comprehensive studies of so-called recidivism rates have been done of women involved in alternative sentencing programs, but there are indications that community-based, family unity efforts work, practically and financially. For example, Pittsburgh's 20-year-old Program for Female Offenders reports a 15 percent return-to-prison rate for women in its program, which runs work-release centers in lieu of jail and provides job training, substance-abuse treatment and parenting classes...

"CLAIM, which serves about 1,000 women a year, helped persuade the state Department of Corrections to start a community-based sentencing program this year for 10 to 12 women and their children in Chicago, home to 70 percent of the women at tthe state prison in Dwight, about 80 miles away. At the same time, Illinois has appropriated millions of dollars for building new prisons for more than 500 women in Dwight, Logan and Decatur. The story is much the same in other states and on the federal level..."

-from "Behind Bars," pages 44-48, March EMERGE Magazine (Washington, D.C.)

African Communities In U.S. Trying To Build Economic Power

"In the words of Muhammad Nassardeen, the president of Recycling Black Dollars in Los Angeles: 'We know how much money black people spend. We want to use that spending to help our community grow'. Recycling Black Dollars is a Los Angeles nonprofit that has been working since 1988 to encourage peoples to buy black.

"The basic idea is that people should spend their dollars at local black-owned businesses and move their savings and checking accounts to black-owned banks. These businesses, advocates believe, are more likely to hire African-Americans, more likely to support African American community institutions such as schools and arts programs, more likely to loan money to blacks for homes and other businesses and more likely to purchase their business-related items from other black-owned businesses.

"This is no different from the way any other community acts, Nassardeen says. 'Empowering our own banks is natural. Ninety percent of Asians bank at their own banks, [while] only 3 percent of blacks bank with black banks'...

"Some buy-black projects aim at African-Americans' spending habits and leave it at that. Gatewood[Curtis Gatewood, president of the Durham, N.C. chapter of the NAACP] admits that the North Carolina NAACP has not had the succes it hoped for in 'fixing the minds' of local African-Americans about the importance of supporting black businesses. Some people see the campaigns as kind of a hokey black economic nationalism without much substance...

"But in other cases the projects are much more complex and work on numerous levels to support development in the African-American community. In Seattle, for example, a nine-year-old organization called the Black Dollar Days Task Force combines self-help economic development programs with networking, public relations, direct-action organizing and educational outreach...

"'We have to develop the kinds of businesses that will reinvest in the community....The financial institutions that we want to create are community-controlled development banks', Jeffrey[Rev. Robert L. Jeffrey, director of Black Dollar Days Task Force] says...

"The task force currently operates an endowment fund built on community donations that will serve as the basis for a local development bank, as well as a number of training courses on entrepreneurism and business, a center to help with job searches, and a referral and directory service for black businesses--sort of a Yellow Pages for black-owned enterprises. Already the task force puts on an annual Black Dollar Days promotion to encourage people of all races to spend their money in the African-American community...

"Recycling Black Dollars in Los Angeles is also targetting investment and savings. Recycling's strategy is based on moving money into black-owned banks, which are seen as more willing to provide loans for homes and businesses

in the black community...

"According to Recycling Black Dollars, African-Americans have around $9 billion in deposits at Los Angeles banks; campaign organizers want to see 25 percent of that make the switch into black-owned financial institutions by the year 2000.

"'Last year $7 million was changed--this year the target is $20 million', says Nassardeen, who believes many new businesses will be started and communities revitalized when the campaign starts to have its full effect...

"Despite the success of some of the campaigns in developing innovative programs and moving money from white-owned businesses and banks into black-owned enterprises, there is apparently little or no data exploring the link between these efforts and indicators of economic health such as jobs, income business start-ups, business success rates and the like. Without these figures, it's hard to know if the buy black campaigns are succeeding..."

-from "Keeping the Cash In The Community," pages 13-15, THIRD FORCE Magazine(Oakland, CA.)

Uneven Progress In Solving Communications Problems In Motherland

..."Torn apart by colonial boundaries and still living with the ties to the former colonial administrators in Europe after decades of independence, Africa has yet to get in touch with itself.

"Even with the flow of news about Africa itself tends to come from outside of the country. African countries are still battling to counter Northern perspectives and exchange resources among themselves...

"'We knew very little about each other', said David Lush of the Media Institute of Southern Africa(MISA). 'For instance newspapers in Botswana were relying on Reuters for a story on Namibia. If there was no war or famine in Namibia, then no news about Namibia appeared in the papers'.

"Mr. Lush is part of a unique news exchange program between independent newspapers in the region, known as MISANET, which kicked off in 1994. Some 14 newspapers pool their stories into bulletins of about 200 stories per week. The service has opened up and thus allowed news distributors to begin to circumvent the communication bottlenecks in southern Africa...

"Southern Africa is also home to another revolutionary communications project. SABANEWS links 11 state-owned broadcasters in the Southern African Broadcasting Association (SABA), which has become a vital way for the stations to share news.

"Elsewhere on the continent such initiatives are struggling. The Pan African News Agency(PANA), based in Dakar, Senegal, was set up primarily to report Africa from an African perspective, but it is struggling to live up to its mandate. The agency, set up by the Organization of African Unity in 1963, has been dogged by financial problems...

"Jared Okungu of Kenya's The Nation newspaper said there are efforts to set up similar initiatives like SABA in East Africa. He noted that Africa's biggest problem is that media focuses more on the international scene than events at home. Vast areas of the continent remain under-reported and ignored except in times of crises...

"...it is important, Mr. Okungu said, that Africa communicate with itself and that its media begin to report on Africa for Africans..."

-from "Worlds Apart: Africa Struggles To Communicate Internally," pages 13 and 17, March 11 THE FINAL CALL (Chicago, IL.)

Son Of Patrice Lumumba Playing Role In Zaire Rebellion

"Francois Lumumba was 9 years old when his father, Patrice Lumumba, the great African patriot and the first prime minister of the Congo(Zaire), was assassinated by the agents of imperialism in January 1961...

"A soft-spoken political economist...Francois, 45, said his main purpose for visiting the United States is to correct a number of longstanding misconceptions about his country and to enlist moral and material support against Mobutu's crumbling dictatorship...

"One possible solution to stop the spreading turmoil in Zaire, Francois contended, rests with the Zairian rebels led by Kabila, whom he has known since he was a child.

"'I congratulate Brother Kabila and his proposition for direct negotiations with Mobutu in order to avoid the useless killing of more people', Francois said...

"...Hundreds of Zairian young men have joined the rebels, many of them living under deplorable conditions and eager to end a government that has deprived them and their families of food, clothing and shelter.

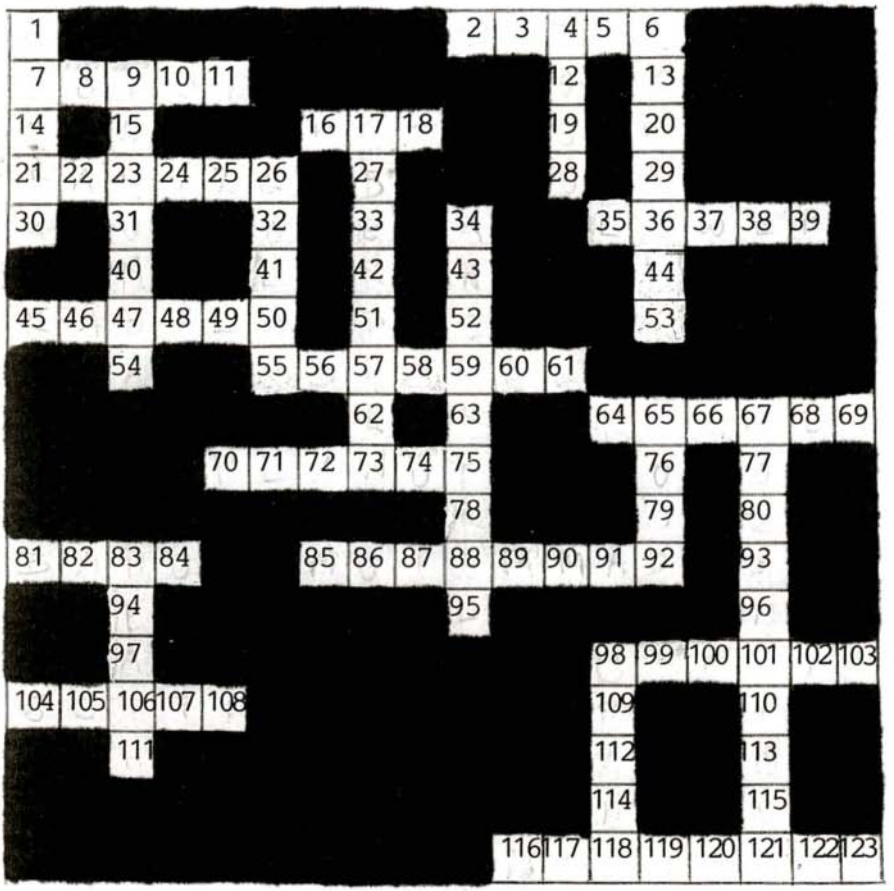
"'Mobutu has amassed a fortune of more than $10 billion', Francois explained. 'That is almost equivalent to the country's national debt. He has accumulated all of this wealth and invested it ourside of the country with houses and cars, while the average worker in Zaire earns about $3 a month. Sixty percent of the national budget is spent on the president and his security, while less than 5 percent is spent on education'...

"Meanwhile, a beleagured Mobutu has seemingly placed his destiny in the hands of the mercenaries. Reports of Serbian and South African mercenaries in Zaire to help Mobutu have recently appeared in the international press...

"Francois said he is counting on 'his Black sisters and brothers' in the United States to understand his plight and respond to his plea for funds and material. He is also calling on members of Congress to place pressure on the Mobutu regime to step down and end the crisis in Zaire..."

-from "Patrice Lumumba's Son To Challenge 'Dictator' Mobutu," pages 2 and 44, March 8 N.Y. AMSTERDAM NEWS(N.Y., N.Y.)

Africentric Crossword Puzzle #14 -Questions



-Continued on page 14-

RISKWATCH

time is time is real
even when it's digital
and even rolex time on a jeweled face
is time you can't escape
it'll catch yo ass
no matter how much heat you pack
to react to havin to face the fact
that time flies whether you havin fun
or havin none or behind the wheel
of a royce or benz tryin to out-run time
in time to get to where you goin
knowin you don't know where that is
and you laugh in the face of time
but it's a waste of time and a crime
for you to be fakin like you can laugh
the forces of time
out of makin their appointed rounds
you could run out of time
get gunned down
fall to the peckin order
of chickens comin home to roost
like Malcolm said
but you got it in yo head
that you bad enough to sling
and do or talk drive-bys
but **too** bad to die
like a limo can't become a
hearse with a quickness
despite what you believe to be yo slickness
cuz even forty-weight oil
run out of slick in time
and all the cash and bump and grind
won't prevent the friction when it comes
and you can't rub against fate
without gettin scratched
and can't out-muscle pay-back
and what did Richard Pryor say?
in real life
when you die there aint no music.

-Mondo

Across

2-Named after a Roman emperor, _____ of the U.S. House of Representatives has become a veritable mascot for the Republican Party.

7-The ____ are a populous ethnic group in coastal Senegal.

16-"Goodbye, Pork Pie ___."

21-_____ is often an important aspect of rite-of-passage ceremonies in traditional African societies.

35-What is now known as the "African Burial Ground" was discovered in 1991 at the planned site of a federal office building in _____ Manhattan.

45-This rebel leader's forces continue to overrun government troops in their march to topple the Mobutu regime in ____.

55-Singobile Mabhena has become the first known female chief of the _____ ethnic population in southern Africa.

64-_____ plays the heroic stranger in the film, "Rosewood."

70-George Washington Carver is best known for the many products he developed from the _____.

81-_____ is a new singer on the scene, known for her dignified stage presence and the burning of candles and incense during her performances.

85-Once one of the "Wilmington Ten," this popular organizer recently changed his last name to "_____."

98-The nation of _____ is where Alex Haley traced his ancestor, Kunta Kente, to.

104-"Notorious B.I.G." was,reportedly, being tailed by the feds on the night of his murder, as part of an investigation of alleged ties to the _____ crime organization.

116-_____, a long-time civil-rights attorney, who was the second African to attend the University of Misssissippi and was recently among a group of African leaders in Misssissippi pressuring for reopening of cases where Africans had been killed doing civil-rights work, was found shot to death in his home in mid-March of this year.

Down

1-"It don't mean a thing if it aint got that _____."

4-This West African nation, _____, is on the Gulf of Guinea.

6-_____ is one of the U.S. Virgin Islands, east of Puerto Rico.

9-The son of a former leader of Congo, who was assassinated, _____, appears now to be a major player in what may become a post-Mobutu Zaire.

17-The cases of a number of African drill sergeants accused of rape at the _____ Training Center near Baltimore have come under scrutiny by the N.A.A.C.P. and the Congressional Black Caucus.

26-The African Jews of Zimbabwe trace their Jewish heritage back to an area known as the "_____ Heights."

34-_____ spirits are typically viewed, in traditional African societies, as intermediaries between people and God.

65-"Boyz In The _____"

67-Many of the so-called "Afrikaners"(mainly, commercial farmers) have been leaving "South Africa" for _____, citing better economic opportunities.

83-_____ Row Records is headed by "Suge" Knight.

98-"_____ Wizard" is a title for a high-ranking official of the Ku Klux Klan.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Economic Empowerment Campaigns: Muhammad Nassardeen, president, Recycling Black Dollars, 110 S. LaBrea Avenue, Suite 510, Inglewood, CA 90301; (310) 673-7777; Reverend Robert L. Jeffrey, Black Dollar Days Task Force, Seattle, WA, 116 21st Ave., Seattle, WA 98122, (206) 323-5958; Curtis Gatewood, president, NAACP, P.O. Box 3312, Durham, NC 27702, (919) 682-4930. In this area, there is the Black United Fund of Nebraska; P.O. Box 11539; Omaha, NE.; 68111.

The National Emergency Conference On Police Brutality And Misconduct will be held on April 25-27 at Hunter College in New York City. It is being put together by the Center for Constitutional Rights, in conjunction with a broad range of public interest legal institutions, legal advocacy organizations and community based organizations. The theme of the Emergency Conference is "Combating the Growing Crisis of Police Brutality: Developing Strategies for Police Accountability and Community Control." For more information about the conference, call 1-800-764-0235.

The play, "Different Dances," directed by Laura Partridge, is an offering of the Omaha Housing Authority's Theater Arts program. The play deals with the challenges and choices that face teenagers as they grow into adulthood. Rehearsals begin April first, with performances set for April 26 through May 31. For more information, contact Laura Partridge at 444-3446.

Announcing PRISON LIFE'S 3rd annual "Art Behind Bars" contest. Categories include: fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama, visual arts. Cash prizes will be awarded. Send inquiries to: Art Behind Bars Contest, PLM; 1436 W. Gray, Ste. 531; Houston, TX. 77019.

PRISON LIFE wants to hear from prisoner musicians making music behind the walls. Send us your tapes, with full details of your musical accomplishments, for possible recording. Send to Jailhous Rock, same address as above.

HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION CREED

Together we seek to know that which is us, to expand our collective consciousness of who we are and whence we come. We exalt in the fact that Afrikans are beautiful in our own right, rather than at the expense of any other group of people. And in the true spirit of the Swahili word, "harambee," we promote the idea that cultural awareness is germane to human growth.

NGUZO SABA(Seven Principles)

Umoja - Unity

Kujichagulia - Self-determination

Ujima - Collective work & responsibility

Ujamaa - Cooperative economics

Nia - Purpose

Kuumba - Creativity

Imani - Faith